AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PUBLICK,

ON THE EXPEDIENCY OF A

REGULAR PLAN

FOR THE

MAINTENANCE AND GOVERNMENT

OF THE

POOR:

IN WHICH ITS

UTILITY with reſpect to INDUSTRY, MORALS, and PUBLICK OECONOMY is proved from REASON; and confirmed by the EXPERIENCE of the HOUSE OF INDUSTRY lately eſtabliſhed in DUBLIN.

WITH SOME

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS on the ENGLISH SYSTEM of POOR LAWS; and, an EXAMINATION of the Chapter in Lord KAIMS's SKETCHES of the HISTORY of MAN relative to the POOR.

Written at the particular Requeſt of the CORPORATION inſtituted for the RELIEF of the POOR, and the Puniſhment of Vagabonds, &c. in the County of the City of DUBLIN.

BY RICHARD WOODWARD, LL. D.
DEAN of CLOGHER, and CHANCELLOR of ST. PATRICK's, DUBLIN.

Πτωχος μηδεις ημιν εν τη πολει γιγνεσθω. PLATO de Leg. lib. 12.

Δηλον αρα εν πολει ου αν ιδης πτωχους, οτι εισι που εν τουτω τω τοπω αποκεκρυμμενοι κλεπται τε και βαλαντιοτομοι, και ιεροσυλοι και παντων των τοιουτων κακων δημιουργοι. PLATO de Rep. lib. 8.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ſhortneſs of the time, allowed to the Author for drawing together his ideas on a ſubject ſo extenſive, (and rendered more intricate by the neceſſity of obviating the Alarm excited by the known Expenſe of the Engliſh Syſtem for the Maintenance of the Poor, as well as of effacing any Impreſſions, from the authority of Lord KAIMS, unfavourable to every legal eſtabliſhment for that purpoſe) will apologize to the candid reader for omiſſions, as well as for inaccuracies, whether of Arrangement or Language. If any Errors ſhould be diſcovered in the general Principles or Reaſoning, for them he has no excuſe to offer—His opinions on this ſubject are the reſult of mature thought, and full conviction.

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PUBLICK, &c.

AS the opinions which I ſubmitted to your conſideration ſome years ago, on the deplorable ſtate of the Poor in this kingdom, and the Juſtice and Expediency, as well as the mode, of making a National Proviſion for them, were honoured with diſtinguiſhed marks of approbation from ſeveral reſpectable Bodies of men; and ſo far countenanced by ſome gentlemen (of the firſt diſtinction for rank and abilities) in their legiſlative capacity, as to have led to two ſucceſſive Acts of Parliament for the regulation of the Poor; I am en-

 couraged

couraged to ſtand forth, once more, at the inſtance of the Governors of the houſe of Induſtry in Dublin, as an Advocate for that important inſtitution, which owes its eſtabliſhment to thoſe laws, and to your munificence. I was firſt induced to hazard my opinions on this delicate, and at that time invidious, ſubject, from a perſuaſion, that the obligation of relieving the Poor had not been fixed, even by Moraliſts, on its beſt foundation, and that a prudent Regulation of them was an object of the firſt importance in every view, whether moral or political. Impreſſed as I was with a Conviction of the duty not to ſuppreſs a train of thoughts ſo intereſting to mankind, I ſtill felt the difficulties of the undertaking, from the extent and intricacy of the matter, from the novelty of my ideas, and ſtill more from my own want of authority. I was well aware of the complicated riſk to myſelf, a ſtranger in a very private ſtation,

tion, at once to advance a new moral theory, to preſume (with what expreſſions of deference ſoever,) to point out a duty to the legiſlative power, and to venture to arraign the police of the kingdom, in oppoſition to the prejudices of moſt, and the ſuppoſed intereſt of all: thoſe friendleſs wretches excepted, for whoſe rights I undertook to plead. But I was ſupported by a conſciouſneſs of the rectitude of my motives, and the clearneſs of my cauſe. For I was ſenſible that I was not obtruding on mankind crude and haſty notions, but opinions, the reſult of enquiry and reflection, and of as fair a balance as I could make from obſervation, in different parts of Europe, of the bad effects ariſing from the want, or the abuſe, of a *Poor Law*. The candour and humanity of the Iriſh nation inclined them to liſten to ſentiments, however ſtrange and unpleaſing, which tended to aſcertain the

rights, and promote the happineſs, of human nature; and truth prevailed with a progreſs rapid beyond my hopes. In the courſe of a few years, I had the unſpeakable ſatisfaction of ſeeing corporations erected by Act of Parliament for the relief and regulation of the Poor in the ſeveral counties of this kingdom; and, by virtue of that law, a great eſtabliſhment in the metropolis, ſet on foot and conducted by gentlemen, of the moſt reſpectable characters, of all ranks, profeſſions, and religious perſuaſions, with ſuch an unprecedented union, as probably nothing but the extenſive benevolence of their common object could have inſpired, and with a liberality of ſentiment which does honour to this age and country. The efforts of ſuch an union could not fail of ſucceſs. The Nuiſance, grievous beyond the experience of other great cities, and from its greatneſs eſteemed to be beyond a remedy

medy, is actually ſuppreſſed. Experience having evinced the practicability and uſefulneſs of the plan, it has accordingly been copied by many cities and towns of the firſt importance. The benefits of the inſtitution are no longer a matter of theory and conjecture; they are univerſally felt; and acknowledged by the teſtimony of a general bounty, the ſureſt evidence of general approbation.

But, flattering as theſe appearances are, it becomes thoſe, who have the conduct of this charity, to warn its well-wiſhers, by no means to lull themſelves in a ſecurity that its foundations are firmly fixed. The preſent univerſal approbation is excited by the recollection of a recent and intolerable grievance; but the efforts of bounty will naturally grow languid, as the memory of the evil ſhall gradually wear away. It will appear from theſe papers,

pers, that ſome regular fund will become neceſſary; and that you muſt ſoon make your option, whether you will ſuffer this eſtabliſhment to fall, and call back the complicated miſeries it has for a time removed, (but which will return after this check with redoubled violence,) or whether you will give your ſanction to the petition of a corporation, who have hitherto conducted it ſo much to your ſatisfaction, for ſome *moderate* aid from parliament *towards* its ſupport. And I flatter myſelf that it will appear too from theſe Papers, that your Prudence is as much engaged as your Humanity—that the Rich are as deeply intereſted as the Poor, in its preſervation. For in the peruſal of them you will obſerve, that I no longer dwell on the obligations of private duty to relieve diſtreſs, or of national juſtice to ſecure to every ſubject a ſupply of the wants of nature. Theſe truths, as I have elſewhere proved,

proved, * ſtand on firm and indiſputable ground.—I ſhall now view a publick maintenance of the Poor as a matter of mere œconomy; making my appeal ſolely to your intereſt, not (as I ſafely might) to your benevolence and compaſſion.

Of the political expediency of ſome regular plan for the ſupport and government of the Poor.

If I were to enlarge on the various benefits reſulting to the Publick, from a good Police with regard to the Poor, I ſhould ſwell the bulk of this Addreſs far beyond my preſent intention, and the purpoſe for which it is written. In my Argument above referred to, I have already ſhewn, that it tends to increaſe the number of the people, by preſerving

* In my Argument for the Poor, publiſhed in 1768.

preſerving the lives of the infant, ſick, and aged poor; to promote induſtry by ſuppreſſing the idle vagrant, and preſerving to the Publick that portion of labour, of which the infirm Poor are ſtill capable. I might add the advantages, political as well as moral, of reducing to an orderly and religious diſcipline in a well governed family, thoſe whom a vagabond courſe of life would otherwiſe expoſe to numberleſs exceſſes of * intemperance and debauchery, † whom the trade of begging

* Many of the loweſt ſhops for retailing ſpirituous liquors, which were a nuiſance to their reſpective neighbourhoods, are ſhut up in conſequence of the ſuppreſſion of common Beggars.

† It appears from the accounts of the Foundling Hoſpital, than an extraordinary number of Infants infected with the venereal diſeaſe, were received there, immediately on the execution of the law, whom their mothers, or other young women uſed to lead about to beg, until they were obliged to quit that idle courſe of life, and reſort to induſtry.

ging would conſtantly engage in the practice of deceit, and the profanation of the name of God, and by its uncertainty muſt occaſionally drive to the commiſſion of felonies, † even for the ſupport of life. I might urge the fatal conſequences of bringing up children in idleneſs, ignorance, and vice; and the practices, but too common, of borrowing, ſtealing, § and (however repugnant to nature it may appear) of mutilating infants to render them inſtruments of this ſhameful and

† The number of perſons brought before the ſitting Juſtices for frays and petty larcenies, as well as of cauſes in the Court of Conſcience, is ſenſibly leſſened.

§ When the corporation for the regulation of the Poor iſſued, to 970 perſons, badges, and licenſes to beg, it appeared from the certificates of the parochial committees, that ſcarce any one of them had young children. Whence then was the number of begging children got, which ſwarmed in our ſtreets?

and pernicious trade. I might urge the collateral bad effects of the reſort of Beggars to the doors of private houſes, by the corruption of ſervants, and in ſome caſes by the communication of infectious Diſtempers. * I might urge the loſs to the real Poor by the practices of the impoſtor, who not only intercepts the relief intended for diſtreſs, but wears out by vexatious importunity the very ſpirit of almsgiving. I might urge the tendency which the daily ſight of ſuch wretched objects, and the frequency of impoſture muſt have, to render familiar or ſuſpicious to us, the miſeries of our fellow-creatures,

* That this is not an imaginary danger, may be inferred from a proviſion in the Engliſh ſtatute of 27 H. 8. c. 25. againſt common doles, from that apprehenſion; and a reſolution of the Iriſh Commons in the year 1661, that all Beggars ſhould be driven out of the City of Dublin by the Magiſtrates, to prevent the ſpreading of infectious diſtempers.

creatures, to ſtifle the early ſenſations of compaſſion in younger minds, and in all to ſap the foundations of that amiable virtue. I might urge the unequal diſtribution of charity amongſt deſerving objects, as from accidental circumſtances one ſhall procure more than an adequate ſupport, whilſt another, of equal or perhaps ſuperior merit, ſhall languiſh unnoticed, and of courſe unrelieved. I might aver (and refer to the trading inhabitants of the city of Dublin for the truth of the allegation) that the ſuppreſſion of Begging has checked the illegal combinations of journeymen, ſo fatal to the manufactures and to themſelves, and revived a Spirit of induſtry throughout the labouring claſs of people, by cutting off this uſual reſource of idleneſs and obſtinacy. I might urge the perpetual interruption of the buſineſs of the ſhopkeeper; the inconvenience to the

the paſſenger; the cruelty, the horror, and the danger of expoſing loathſome, infectious, and frightful objects in the ſtreets, (ſome of whom were admitted into the Houſe of Induſtry at its firſt opening, in the agonies of death) and the conſequent diſgrace to our police, in this reſpect unequalled in any part of Europe. But to all theſe particulars, your own experience will bear a deciſive teſtimony. I ſhall therefore confine my proofs in favour of a publick eſtabliſhment, to the conſideration of œconomy, the only plauſible ſource of oppoſition to ſo ſalutary a Scheme. And if the propoſition, *that a plan ſufficiently extenſive to provide for all the Poor in this kingdom is really calculated to ſave expenſe*, ſhould appear paradoxical to the reader, he is only intreated to ſuſpend awhile his deciſion, and not to permit an indiſtinct idea of the evils of the Engliſh Poor Laws, (which ſhall hereafter be conſidered) ſo far to poſſeſs his

his mind, as to preclude his attention to the arguments in ſupport of it, to my apprehenſion unanſwerable.

A Publick Regulation of the Poor leſſens the number to be relieved.

THE proof of this is very ſhort and deciſive: for it muſt be clear to every man, who attends to this ſubject, that ſo long as any perſons in want remain unrelieved, and undiſcriminated from the impoſtor, a door is opened for Begging in its full extent—it is authorized by an indiſputable claim, that of neceſſity. Thoſe, who are only diſinclined to induſtry, have the ſame licence to addreſs the unwary paſſenger for alms, as thoſe who are entitled by diſtreſs; and being practiſed in deceit, and hardened againſt ſhame, will probably extort more from him than the modeſt ſufferer, overwhelmed at once with miſery

miſery and confuſion, and unable to relate his ſad ſtory. But whatever may be the diſtribution, the burden of ſupporting both is thrown on the Publick. Humanity forbids to let them periſh indiſcriminately—they muſt both be maintained. A Regulation for the Poor will draw the line, and of courſe leſſen the number. In what proportion, muſt vary according to local circumſtances; but I imagine the moſt favourable examiners of the pretenſions of Beggars would not give their ſanction to one half of thoſe who follow that wretched Occupation. Nor is this idea founded on conjecture only; for as ſoon as the Corporation, inſtituted for the relief of the Poor in the City of Dublin, had diſtinguiſhed the real object from the impoſtor by a badge, the ſtreets ſeemed comparatively clear. But this fact will be more fully ſtated hereafter, and no more is neceſſary to prove,

prove, that a Publick Regulation of the Poor muſt leſſen the number to be relieved.

A Publick Maintenance, properly adminiſtered, will diminiſh the expenſe of ſupporting a given number.

In order to ſtate the comparative expenſe, we muſt aſſume, as the foundation of the calculation in either caſe, that the perſons in queſtion are to have the wants of nature ſupplied. By which I would be underſtood to mean ſuch accommodation, as the Induſtrious Poor can earn at the loweſt rate of wages. To more, they are not entitled; nay, more would be prejudicial in many reſpects; and on leſs they can hardly ſubſiſt; at leaſt in this kingdom. On theſe principles, I ſhall ſtate the Compariſon as minutely as I can.

If

If for Inſtance 500 grown perſons (the average number in the Houſe of Induſtry in Dublin) were to be maintained by caſual alms, many of them by lucky accidents, an impoſing appearance, or ſkill in their trade, would gain more than a bare livelihood. One of the immediate effects of the ſuppreſſion of Begging in Dublin, was the failure of many of the low retailers of ſpirituous liquors. Now, all expenſe, beyond what is requiſite to provide for the Poor the neceſſaries of life, is evidently a dead loſs to the Contributor, and at the ſame time holds forth a temptation to idleneſs. Let us then compare the expenſe of ſupplying them with bare neceſſaries, either at large, or in an Houſe of Induſtry.

Lodging for 500 at 6d. per week a head (the loweſt rate in this city) amounts to 650l. per annum, a ſum far beyond what would attend an Houſe

Houſe of Induſtry for that number, unleſs there were a ſhameful profuſion in building, furniture or ſervants wages: Whoever is diſpoſed to take that trouble, may ſee the difference by inſpecting the annual accounts of the Houſe of Induſtry in Dublin.

As to the articles of diet, fewel and candles, can it bear a moment's doubt, that an individual Pauper, who muſt ever purchaſe in ſmall quantities and at the higheſt rates, cannot ſupply himſelf on as cheap terms, as the Purveyor of a well managed Hoſpital, who buys large quantities, at the cheapeſt ſeaſons, with ready money?

With reſpect to cloaths, the ſame advantages obtain as to the firſt purchaſe, together with the certainty of preſerving them by conſtant repairs and cleanlineſs, and transferring them

in caſe of death, which muſt happen very frequently in a number compoſed almoſt entirely of the aged and infirm.

WITH reſpect to medicine, if the Beggar be not received into ſome other Hoſpital, where probably the expence will be equal, he is abandoned to periſh; either by hunger, if confined at home, or by diſeaſe, if expoſed to the ſeverity of the weather.

THAT the number of perſons loſt by untimely death, where the poor are in a ſtate of common Begging, muſt be very conſiderable, may be inferred from this circumſtance: that in the Infirmaries of the Houſe of Induſtry in Dublin, from the age and infirmities of the Poor, in ſpite of comfortable lodging, an healthful ſituation, exact attention to cleanlineſs and pure air, proper food, competent clothing, temperance, and

and medical aſſiſtance, the average number of ſick amounts to upwards of one-tenth. I allow that a *ſaving* would be made by leaving the ſick poor to periſh in the ſtreets, and that ſome *ſimilar* inſtances of œconomy would ariſe from permitting them to ſuffer, as long as their wretched lives endured, the united miſeries of hunger, cold, and nakedneſs. But *ſuch ſavings* are excluded from *this* calculation, as all are to be ſupplied with the neceſſaries of life, on the footing of the loweſt claſs of labourers: and on that ſuppoſition, it is evident they can be ſupported at the ſmalleſt expence in a publick eſtabliſhment; even without any conſideration of the aid derived from the produce of their own labour, which would be totally loſt in a vagabond life.

On the whole then, either there is ſome defect unobſerved by me in this train of reaſoning, *or a publick regulation of the Poor muſt leſſen the number to be relieved*; and a publick maintenance muſt diminiſh the expence of ſupporting a given number; conſequently, the mode of leaving them to caſual alms is as improvident, as it is inhuman and unjuſt. The only cauſes which I can aſſign for a contrary opinion are, that the careleſs never calculate, as they do not feel, the loſs of money gradually crumbling away in occaſional alms; and the callous are apprehenſive of loſing an exemption, which a bad police ſuffers them to derive from their want of feeling; and dread the idea of ſharing the common burden, however leſſened by a better management, in proportion to their ability. But whether theſe principles

are

are juſtified by fact, will beſt appear from

A calculation of the ſum annually ſaved to the inhabitants of Dublin by the eſtabliſhment of the Houſe of Induſtry.

THE Corporation for the regulation of the Poor thought it proper to begin, by an accurate inquiry into the number and circumſtances of thoſe, who could not ſubſiſt without Begging in the Streets; and for that purpoſe called to their aid committees, conſiſting of the Clergy, and ſome of the moſt reſpectable inhabitants in the ſeveral Pariſhes of Dublin, to make that inquiry in their reſpective diſtricts: whoſe certificates, ſpecifying minutely the circumſtances of the caſe, and ſigned by a quorum of three, entitled the Pau-

per to a Badge and Licenſe to beg throughout the county of the city, till an Houſe of Induſtry could be provided. Of theſe badges they diſtributed 970, and were alarmed by a ſubſequent demand for ſeveral hundreds more. Yet great as that number appeared to the Corporation, they had the ſatisfaction of obſerving, that the alarm taken by thoſe who deſpaired of procuring Badges, (and who from fear of the coercive powers of the law, either withdrew from the city, or betook themſelves to uſeful Induſtry,) had removed ſo much a greater number, that the ſtreets appeared comparatively clear. From that appearance, from the further probability that in the mixed multitude of Beggars, not one half could have paſſed ſo ſtrict an examination, and the conſideration that ſcarce any Children were found to belong to thoſe who were entitled

to

to badges, it was univerſally allowed, that the groſs number infeſting theſe ſtreets muſt have far exceeded 2000. On the ſuppoſition of 2000, we ſhall proceed to calculate the amount of the ſum levied on the inhabitants (in a mode productive of a thouſand other miſchiefs) for their ſupport.

Lodging for 2000 at 6*d. per week*	£. 2600 *per ann.*
Clothing for ditto, (for even old cloths given to them, were of ſome real value) at £. 1 *per ann.* - - - -	2000
Food, coal, and candles, at 3*d. per* day, or 4*l.* 11*s.* 3*d. per annum.* - - - -	9125
Total expenſe	13725

for the mere neceſſaries of life; without allowance of medicines for the ſick, ſpirituous liquors, or any other luxuries;

ries; whereas (as I before obſerved) ſeveral of the low ſhops for retailing ſpirituous liquors were ſhut up on the opening of the Houſe of Induſtry. Some eminent manufacturers, with whom I have converſed on this ſubject (from obſerving repeated inſtances of journeymen quitting their looms, &c. to follow Begging, as a more beneficial occupation) ſtated the gains of a common Beggar at 6*s*. per week, at the leaſt, which on the number of 2000, amounted to £. 31200 per ann. Whatever the ſum might be, it was levied principally on the induſtrious; as the doors of the ſhopkeeper were open to the Beggar, and he was obliged almoſt at any rate to buy off * the interruption

* At ſuch a height was this nuiſance arrived, that many if not all the ſhopkeepers were under a compoſition with a certain number of Beggars, to whom they gave a weekly pay, on condition of their not moleſting their doors, and interrupting their buſineſs.

terruption which they gave to his trade; but on the ſuppoſition as above of bare neceſſaries,

The expenſe amounted to - -	£. 13725
Total expenſe of the Houſe of Induſtry *per annum* - - -	3600
Annual ſaving to the inhabitants of Dublin - -	£. 10125
Annual profit to the Publick from the labour of 1500 perſons now driven from begging to induſtry, at about 7*l.* a year *per* head, the ſmalleſt ſum on which they could ſubſiſt - - -	£. 10500

But as it may be inſinuated, that however plauſible it may appear, that the Poor would be more cheaply ſupported in a collective body than ſeparately; yet in fact, from the negligent or corrupt conduct of ſuch eſtabliſhments, the reverſe is true; let us now compare the expenſe of maintaining

500 common Beggars, with that of ſupporting the like number of Poor in the Houſe of Induſtry in Dublin, even in the infant ſtate of its manufactures: and the account will be found to ſtand thus,

Maintenance of 500 common Beggars at the leaſt poſſible ſum, being ¼ of the ſum above-mentioned, - -	£. 3431 5	
Groſs expenſe in the houſe of Induſtry about - - - -	£. 3600	
Deduct coſt to beadles who take up Beggars, and oblige the other 1500 to reſort to uſeful labour about - -	£. 120	
Infirmary for 50 at (ſuppoſe) £. 5 *per* head *per annum* - -	250	
Profit on the labour of ſuch of the 500 as are able to work	270	
	640	
Expenſe for maintenance of 500 in the Houſe of Induſtry -	2960	
Annual ſaving on that numb.	471 5	
	3431 5	

And

And as the race of inveterate Vagabonds will become gradually extinct, (for no children are permitted to be trained up to Begging) there is almoſt a certain proſpect, that the perſons to be received into this houſe will be fewer in number, and more amenable to order and induſtry. Regularity, temperance, and the conſtant performance of religious duties, have already produced in the houſe a ſenſible reform; and as in ſo ſhort a time 570 have been diſcharged, on ſecurity that they would return to labour; this inſtitution muſt by degrees affect the morals of the whole lower claſs of people. On the whole then it tends not only effectually to relieve the wants, to increaſe the induſtry, and to reform the morals of the lower people, to preſerve their children from corruption, to remove an odious nuiſance, and to improve in various ways the publick

Police,

Police, but to effect theſe national purpoſes at much leſs than one third of the expenſe, formerly laviſhed with a profuſion ineffective to the real Poor, though burdenſome to the Rich; and, (by the encouragement of Vagabonds) at once pernicious and diſgraceful to the Publick. Whilſt I am enumerating theſe benefits, I am bound in juſtice to mention to whom the Publick is principally indebted for them. I cannot therefore conclude this ſection, without bearing my teſtimony, that the effectual eſtabliſhment of this Houſe, productive of ſuch extenſive benefits not only to the Metropolis and it's neighbourhood, but to the whole Kingdom, (by proving the practicability, and pointing out the manner of carrying ſo complicated a plan into execution) is principally owing to Mr. BENJAMIN HOUGHTON, who has devoted his time to the ſervice of this Corporation,

tion, for upwards of three years, to the interruption and detriment of his own extenſive manufactures. And the advice of this reſpectable Citizen, has been of as eminent uſe in arranging the plan, as his zeal, perſeverance and intrepidity in the execution of it.

The ſame reaſonings are applicable to ſimilar eſtabliſhments in the country.

If it be objected, that ſome of the ſturdy Beggars, calculated in the laſt chapter, to have been forced to labour, are in fact retired into the country, to carry on their old trade of Begging; that objection, to my apprehenſion, is ſo far from bearing againſt the ſyſtem of eſtabliſhing houſes of Induſtry, that it operates in favour of it. It points out, that if the law had been univerſally executed, the good effect would have

have been uniform. And as it was certainly to prevent expenſe, that the ſums required by the act were not preſented in moſt of the counties in this kingdom, we are naturally led to inquire how far that idea was founded in true Oeconomy: for to Oeconomy our preſent attention is confined.

By the firſt act of parliament the Grand Juries of the ſeveral counties were required to levy by preſentment, (the *eſtabliſhed* mode of providing for County expenſes,) a ſum not leſs than 200l. nor exceeding 400l. per annum. It is evident to any one who knows the number of profitable acres in this kingdom, that if the higheſt of the two ſums had been levied in every county, the whole would have amounted to about one farthing per profitable acre throughout the kingdom at an average, but as the preſentment probably

bably would have been for the loweſt ſum, the burden would not have exceeded half a farthing per acre.—This annual ſum, trifling as it ſeems, would have eſtabliſhed an effective Houſe of Correction for Vagabonds in each County, the firſt ſtep towards an Houſe of Induſtry; which probably would ſoon have been engrafted on it by voluntary contributions. This, however, the Gentlemen in general thought proper to decline, from an idea that the county charges were already too burdenſome, eſpecially on the lower people; but whoever compares the proportion which the cottager, with a holding *(ſuppoſe)* of four acres, would have been obliged to contribute towards this publick expenſe, (which at the higheſt calculation could not have exceeded one penny per year) with the ſum, even formerly levied on him by vagrant Beggars, which muſt be

be increaſed by the additional number driven from the great cities, and thoſe counties where this ſalutary law is carried into execution, will probably be inclined to think this as miſtaken a meaſure of Oeconomy, as of Police. But to return to the Houſe of Induſtry in Dublin.

THE utility of the eſtabliſhment being evinced both from reaſon and experience, the only doubt that can now ariſe, is on the mode of ſupporting it; whether it ſhould *entirely* rely on voluntary Contributions, or receive *ſome* aid from an eſtabliſhed fund. I ſhall now enter into that great queſtion, the only real ſource of oppoſition to an inſtitution, founded ſo deeply in juſtice, humanity, and policy.

Voluntary

Voluntary contributions are not ſufficiently certain and permanent, to be depended upon for the ſupport of ſo great an eſtabliſhment.

It has been ſlightly hinted before, that the efforts of a bounty, excited by the preſſure of an intolerable nuiſance, will gradually grow languid, as the memory of the grievance ſhall wear away. He muſt have little acquaintance with human nature, and be totally void of experience in the execution of charitable ſchemes, to whom this truth ſhall require a proof. But if facts were neceſſary, this very Charity, which appears to have been hitherto ſo nobly ſupported, would ſupply them. For the collections from houſe to houſe have gradually declined; and what is a remarkable proof of what I now advance, the firſt, made

whilſt the plan was untried, and by the Generality of the inhabitants of this city thought impracticable, amounted to 2900l. the ſecond, made when the Publick was in a great meaſure relieved, and of courſe the efficacy of the ſcheme evinced, (and during the ſitting of Parliament too) amounted only to 2200l. and it is to be apprehended, that the third Collection which is not yet completed will fall very ſhort, even of that ſum. The reaſon is obvious; the nuiſance, which was at firſt intolerable, has gradually diſappeared. The Corporation have been obliged, in order to keep the ſcheme on foot, to uſe for their current expenſes the large ſubſcriptions, entitling the benefactors to be choſen governors for life; inſtead of putting them out to intereſt, and making them, (what they were intended for) the baſis of an annual income. Many of theſe

theſe benefactions were obtained too by the application of the active friends of the charity, ſeconded by the preſence of the national grievance. But when the novelty ceaſes, neither can there be expected a perpetual ſucceſſion of ſolicitors equally ſtrenuous, nor can the ſame evidence hereafter appear of the neceſſity of a contribution. I am tired of proving points ſo clear, and ſhall only add, that the failure of one collection would inſtantly deſtroy the eſtabliſhment, which on the 25th of March laſt, had only a Fund ſufficient to ſupport it for three months, and a revenue of 458l. 9s. by annual ſubſcriptions.

Voluntary contributions if they ſhould form a certain, would ſtill be an inequitable and improper fund.

To ſupport this propoſition I ſhall aſſume, that common Begging is a Grievance to every individual, and pernicious to the Publick. If that be granted, which is ſelf evident, can it be equitable to leave on the generous and benevolent, the burden of freeing his avaricious and hard-hearted neighbour from that common Grievance? Or can it be equitable to the Publick, to permit the Grievance to be perpetual, becauſe the moſt undeſerving members of ſociety do not like to contribute in a reaſonable proportion to remove it? Would a wiſe government proceed in a like manner with regard to any other Nuiſance? Where the advantage is to be

be ſhared by All, it is the clear dictate of equity and reaſon, that the expenſe and trouble of procuring it ſhould be borne by All, in proportion to their ability.

But on other accounts it would be improper. The charity of the benevolent ſhould be conſidered as a reſerve for the relief of ſuch caſes, as general regulations cannot comprize. If this reſource be exhauſted in relieving ordinary diſtreſſes (for which the wiſdom of the legiſlature could have provided by a fund drawn from the common wealth of its ſubjects, on the reaſonable and juſt principle of making all the Rich contribute in a fair proportion to the relief of all the Poor) what fund remains for the numerous occaſional misfortunes, which no human wiſdom can foreſee? The unfeeling are never inclined,

inclined, the benevolent are no longer able, to relieve them.

The cauſes of the immenſe expenſe incurred in England from the Poor Laws; and the difference of the ſyſtem adopted in this kingdom.

I AM well aware, that the intolerable burden of the Poor Tax in England, has created ſo general an Alarm in this kingdom, that many will turn away with impatience and diſdain from reaſonings advanced to prove, that a national eſtabliſhment is the cheapeſt mode of ſupporting the Poor; whilſt thoſe of more virtue and reflection, whoſe underſtandings are convinced, are yet deterred from riſking on ſpeculative probability, (however ſtrong) ſupported by only a ſingle fact, a trial, which they think the experience of another

another kingdom has fully evinced to be ſo fatal. Now in order to take off theſe popular apprehenſions, it may be ſufficient to apprize the Publick, that whenever it ſhall be found neceſſary to apply to the Legiſlature for their aid, the utmoſt wiſh of the Corporation is to procure an appropriation of ſome ſmall Tax, to be levied from thoſe who are immediately benefited by the eſtabliſhment, in the very mode, which has received the *repeated ſanction* of Parliament, for the ſupport of a Publick Work-houſe in this City; (though the money raiſed from it has been ſince applied to *another* charity) ſufficient to give ſome degree of ſtability to it, and yet leaving an opening for voluntary contributions; granted only from ſeſſion to ſeſſion, (as it is to be hoped that charitable bequeſts to the corporation may in time diminiſh, if not totally take away the neceſſity of

any

any ſuch tax) grounded on a calculation of the numbers actually maintained in the Houſe, during the two former years, and on that principle to be regularly accounted for to Parliament. But in reſpect to the Engliſh Syſtem, I think it can be made manifeſt, to ſuch as are willing to find the truth, that the expenſe of it muſt be attributed to two regulations, neither of which has taken place, as indeed I can aſſert with authority, they were from that very apprehenſion ſtudiouſly avoided, in the two laws enacted for the relief and regulation of the Poor in this kingdom. Theſe are, veſting in the Poor a *legal right* to relief; and confining the right of ſettlement to ſo narrow a diſtrict as a *ſingle* pariſh. The former gives occaſion to many applications founded on falſe allegations, and of courſe in ſome inſtances to impoſition, as well as to legal proceſſes; the latter to vexatious

diſputes

diſputes about ſettlements, and to expenſive removals, whilſt the pariſhes are at perpetual war with each other; at the ſame time that it neceſſarily devolves the diſtribution of the publick money on perſons by no means fitted for ſuch a truſt by education or fortune; and renders it impoſſible to form on ſo ſmall a ſcale, any plan for employment, diſcipline, œconomy, or effectual checks on impoſture. I could engage to trace almoſt all the evils ariſing from the Engliſh Poor Laws, to this latter ſource, and propoſed to have treated this ſubject more at large; but that *my* teſtimony would be ſuperfluous at a time, when a Committee of the Engliſh Houſe of Commons, after a mature reviſion of the Poor Laws, have come to the following reſolutions:

"THAT

"THAT it is the opinion of this "Committee, that the preſent method "of regulating the Poor in ſeparate "pariſhes and townſhips, is in general "ineffectual for their proper relief and "employment.

"THAT it is the opinion of this "Committee, that if the diſputes about "ſettlements and removals of the Poor "betweeen one pariſh or place, and "another in the ſame country, could be "prevented, the great expenſe attend-"ing ſuch litigation would be ſaved, "the Poor would have an eaſier acceſs "to places where they might find em-"ployment, and would avoid the ſe-"vere and cruel treatment which they "frequently receive from the contend-"ing pariſhes during ſuch conteſt.

"THAT

"THAT it is the opinion of this "Committee, that if the Poor were to "be maintained and employed at one "general county expenſe, thoſe diſ-"putes would in a great meaſure be "avoided, the ſpirit and intention of "the Statute made in the 43d year of "Queen Elizabeth would be promoted, "and the regulations and proviſions "therein contained, better enforced.

"THAT it is the opinion of this Com-"mittee, that the eſtabliſhing proper "houſes and buildings, at ſuch places "in each county as ſhall be beſt ſitu-"ated for the reception, accommoda-"tion and employment of the ſeveral "Poor and diſorderly perſons, proper "to be ſent thither, and for the conve-"nience of their being duly inſpected "and attended to, will be the moſt "eaſy and effectual method for reliev-

"ing

" ing the Impotent, and employing the " able Poor."

WHOEVER compares theſe Reſolutions, *in favour of a Diſtribution of the Poor by counties, and maintaining them in Houſes of Induſtry*, with the Act for the relief of the Poor, in Ireland, muſt obſerve that they accede to the ideas of the Legiſlature of this kingdom. The Committee at the ſame time moſt wiſely and juſtly preſerved the *legal right* of the Poor, and I am convinced might, with great advantage, leave it open not only to the native, but to every ſtranger reſorting thither, to avail himſelf of a Houſe of Induſtry, where temperance, labour and confinement would hold forth no temptation to an idle, debauched Vagabond.

As

As to the ideal danger of excluding the exerciſe and extinguiſhing the virtue of charity, they muſt be ſtrangers indeed to the diſtreſſes of the Poor, in this and every other country, who apprehend a want of opportunities to exerciſe it, tho' the Legiſlature ſhould have interfered with the utmoſt liberality; but it is almoſt ridiculous to obſerve, with what ſolicitude certain writers ſpeak of the cultivation of this virtue, at the very time that they are labouring to ſap the foundation of almoſt every charitable inſtitution, and eſpecially of a legal Eſtabliſhment, the moſt effectual and judicious proviſion for the Poor. This objection is urged with particular earneſtneſs by Lord KAIMS, in a recent publication;* and will be more fully conſidered *in the following*

* Vide Sketches of the Hiſtory of Man, by Lord Kaims.

following Examination of his principles relative to the Poor.

BEFORE I enter on this ſubject, I cannot avoid expreſſing my regret, at the neceſſity which a cauſe ſo intereſting to the rights and happineſs of human nature lays me under, to point out various miſtakes and inconſiſtencies in a writer, who bears no inconſiderable rank in the learned world. But as that very eminence adds danger to his authority, a free diſcuſſion of his principles, becomes more neceſſary, and is certainly authorized by his own example—by the little reſerve with which he impeaches the manners, and legiſlative wiſdom of an illuſtrious nation. If any ſentiment however ſhould unawares fall from my pen, inconſiſtent with that moderation and civility which ſhould ever attend the controverſies of men of education, or unbecoming

becoming the reſpect due to Lord KAIMS's character, I now beſpeak his and the reader's candour; and flatter myſelf, that after a previous declaration of my abhorrence of that perſonality with which contention of this kind is often diſgraced, any unguarded expreſſion will be imputed only to a Zeal in the cauſe of the diſtreſſed, and a conviction of the fatal conſequences of the opinions diſſeminated by this ingenious and learned author.

THE two principal objects of the Chapter I am now conſidering are, to point out the abſurdity of the Engliſh *Poor Law*; and to prove the moral and political impropriety of any permanent interference of the legiſlature in favour of the Poor, a demonſtration of which would indeed be abſolutely neceſſary to juſtify the author in "*declaring reſolutely againſt any perpetual*

" *tual tax for the Poor.*" * I do not mean by this, that he adheres uniformly to theſe principles, but that they are his general premiſes, and the latter indiſpenſably neceſſary to his concluſion. But unleſs I have unfortunately miſapprehended, (for I am conſcious that I have endeavoured fairly, and advantageouſly to repreſent) his meaning, he is in each of theſe points not more remote from ſound Morality and Policy, than inconſiſtent with Himſelf.

His objections to the Engliſh Poor Laws are derived from conſiderations, partly of police, partly of morality, " that they depopulate the country " and raiſe the price of Labour, are " miſerably defective in preventing " mal-adminiſtration, oppreſſive, and " unjuſt;

* The Clauſes included within double Commas are Lord Kaims's own Words.

"unjuſt; ſubverſive of induſtry, pa-
"rental and filial affection, and cha-
"rity." The reader will obſerve that I have changed the order in which the author places theſe objections, but I believe he will not accuſe me of having diminiſhed their force by arranging them in this method, which at the ſame time renders them ſuſceptible of a more clear and conciſe anſwer. Having now preſented them to the reader in their united force, I ſhall proceed to examine them ſeparately.

That a parochial ſettlement tends to the deſtruction of cottages, as well as to prevent the free acceſs of the labourer to his employment, I have been fully perſuaded, from the firſt moment that I took the Engliſh Poor Laws into conſideration, with a view of ſketching out ſome plan for the regulation of the wretched Poor of this

kingdom. But whether, on the whole, it diminiſhes the number of people, can only be determined by balancing this loſs with the gain from a proper care of the ſick, aged and infant Poor, which, it is evident, (and I have elſewhere proved) muſt certainly contribute to preſerve lives, and yet has been totally omitted by this Author together with every other political conſideration, favourable to the Engliſh ſyſtem. I grant however, that there is ſome weight in the objection, but it will probably ſoon be taken off by the wiſe change, projected by the committee of the Houſe of Commons, from a *parochial* to a *county* diſtribution. Theſe two circumſtances of confining the ſettlement to too ſmall a diſtrict, and making no proviſion for the ſtranger, are, to my apprehenſion, the ſources of theſe and every other of the imperfections attending that great and benevolent

volent ſyſtem. But why do I call it benevolent? when this author contends that it is "oppreſſive and unjuſt,"—oppreſſive, becauſe "the overſeers "with the approbation of two magiſ-"trates can aſſeſs the Tax,"—and unjuſt, becauſe the "induſtrious poor "Man is charged with the mainte-"nance of the idle."

WITH regard to the firſt, he ſeems to forget that the overſeer is checked as to the general ſum, by being obliged to contribute in a due proportion to his property, fixed by long uſage, and not to be changed inequitably by an annual officer without creating great alarm. He omits to mention the legal proviſions againſt clandeſtine proceedings, (by the 17 G. 2.) * and

 without

* To prevent Juſtices from giving an improper order in favour of any pauper, it is enacted by the 9 G.

without the ſhadow of a proof roundly aſſerts, that the appeal appointed to the general ſeſſions would be either nugatory or pernicious, becauſe the magiſtrates would either decline the trouble of an inquiry, or if they did inquire, would only increaſe the evil by an unjuſt deciſion in favour of the Rich. To ſuch large aſſertions I can only anſwer, that they were never applied with leſs propriety, than to the adminiſtration of juſtice in England †.

BUT

9 G. 2. c. 7. that no juſtice ſhall order relief to any poor Perſon, without oath made of the cauſe; and that ſuch perſon had applied for and been refuſed relief; and until the Overſeers had been ſummoned to ſhew cauſe, and ſuch perſon to whom relief is ordered ſhall be entered in the pariſh book, and the officers ſhall not bring to the account of the pariſh, any money given to any poor Perſons not regiſtered.

† By 17 G. 2. c 3. it is enacted, the Overſeers ſhall give notice in the church of every Poor Rate allowed by the Juſtice, the next Sunday after ſuch allowance;

BUT the Engliſh Poor Laws, "are un-
"juſt, becauſe the induſtrious are load-
"ed with the maintenance of the idle."
This he ſupports by many extraordi-
nary allegations; "in England," ſays
he, "every man has a right to be
"idle, and every idler has a mainte-
"nance; he can ſecure bread for himſelf
"and children whenever he takes a
"diſlike to work; when he does not
"like the wages, he can abandon the
"work altogether, and put himſelf on
"the Pariſh." Now if a Pariſh main-
tenance were ſo much at his command,
how could the deſcription of the mi-
ſeries of the Poor in London by Mr.
FIELDING and the author of ANGE-
LONI'S LETTERS, (on which he builds
ſo much of his argument) be true?
How

allowance; and no Rate ſhall be allowed ſufficient, ſo as to collect the ſame, unleſs ſuch notice have been given. And they ſhall permit every inhabitant to inſpect the ſame and take copies, &c.

How can he account for what he aſſerts ſo boldly, (tho' without being juſtified by fact,) that " England *in* " *particular* abounds with Beggars" ? but let the reader judge, whether the law obliges, or even authorizes the overſeers to relieve an idler. By the acts of Elizabeth, they are enjoined to ſet to work even the real Poor according to their ſtrength The vagrant is forbid by Law to beg, he is liable to whipping, to impriſonment in an houſe of correction, or in the common jail; he is entitled, or rather condemned, to the maintenance of a felon.

If the induſtrious man contributes to the relief of the diſtreſſed, he is only adding to a fund of which he and his helpleſs family may avail themſelves in the day of adverſity. It is his intereſt, it is an indirect ſaving for his own benefit. When he contributes towards

towards the ſuppreſſion of vagabonds, he is relieving himſelf, as well as the publick, from a nuiſance ſo great, that Lord KAIMS himſelf plans a remedy for it at the publick expenſe.

IN proof that it is miſerably defective in preventing mal-adminiſtration he aſſerts, "that great ſums are levied "beyond what the Poor receive; it "requires briguing to be choſen a "Church Warden; the nomination, in "London eſpecially, gives him credit "at once." In a very few large Pariſhes in London, this may perhaps be true. It may be an object to a common Tradeſman to have the expenditure, and of courſe a temporary uſe, of the great ſums aſſeſſed for the Poor; and where ſo many hands are employed in the Adminiſtration of ſo immenſe a revenue, perhaps no arrangement could prevent the intruſion of ſome abuſe.

abuſe. But this writer ſhould in candour have mentioned the checks of ſuch abuſe by the * 17 of G. 2. And if he had made proper inquiries, he would have found that the office of Church Warden is almoſt univerſally eſteemed a *burdenſome* employment.

" But the Engliſh *Poor Laws* are productive of evils ſtill more deplorable, for they are ſubverſive of *Induſtry* and

* By the 17 G. 2. c. 38. it is enacted, that the overſeers ſhall yearly, within 14 days after new ones ſhall be appointed, deliver to their Succeſſors, a true account to be entered in a book, and ſigned by them, of all ſums by them received, or rated and aſſeſſed, and not received; and of all materials in their hands, or in the hands of any of the Poor to be wrought; and of all ſums paid by them, and of all things concerning their office; and the ſame to be verified upon oath before a juſtice, and ſhall deliver over the money and materials in their hands; on pain of being committed to goal by two Juſtices, till they ſhall make ſuch account and delivery.

and *Morality*." That the parochial ſettlement is often a check on the free reſort of labourers to their employment, has been allowed: So far it is certainly injurious to induſtry. But if that loſs were fairly balanced by the additional labour procured by diſcountenancing Begging, driving the ſturdy vagrant to work, furniſhing ſuitable employment to the partly diſabled, and training up children in habits of induſtry, the ſcale would turn on the ſide of the Engliſh ſyſtem, though in this point imperfect. But even with reſpect to this, Lord KAIMS aſſerts, what is to me perfectly new, " that a " labourer in England is afraid to quit " the pariſh where he has gained a " ſettlement, for fear of being cut " out of a ſettlement altogether." I have ever underſtood that no man could loſe his firſt ſettlement, but by gaining

gaining a new one; and that removals with their train of expenſe and inconvenience were grounded on that idea. But is it true, that expectation of relief in caſe of inability tends to deſtroy a ſpirit of Induſtry? Is it a Fact, that mankind are idle and profligate in conſequence of a regular plan? If it produce that effect in ſome, may not a certainty of ſupport for a numerous family, be to others, an encouragement to marriage? And is not that regular ſettlement in life beſt calculated to preſerve ſobriety, induſtry, and decency of manners? However as theſe reaſonings are in ſome degree conjectural, we ſhall form a better determination, by examining how far Fact quadrates with either ſuppoſition. Are the common people leſs induſtrious in thoſe nations, who provide beſt for the Poor; as France, Scotland, Berne in Switzerland, Holland,

land, and England? Are not the inhabitants of theſe Countries diſtinguiſhed by a ſpirit of Induſtry? I fancy Lord KAIMS would be puzzled to name any country, in which a general ſpirit of Induſtry prevails, where the Poor are left (as he recommends) "to ſhift for themſelves," that is, to beg or ſteal, for they neither will nor ſhould ſtarve.

THOSE nations only "where go-"vernment is a ſcience," (as he expreſſes it) who underſtand police, who have felt the value of Induſtry, and who know that the number of hands uſefully employed, conſtitutes the riches of a nation, give attention to the regulation of the Poor. Political prudence induces them not to ſuffer any portion of the labour of an individual to be loſt to his country, whilſt that humanity, which ever follows civilization,

vilization, and that affluence which reſults from Induſtry, incline and enable them to relieve diſtreſs.

How he could be led to think that the law ſapped the foundations of *parental and filial affection*, I cannot conceive. He aſſerts indeed " that the " parent is relieved of an anxiety for " his children, and that they are inde- " pendent on him, by means of the " tax for the Poor—that it is common " to ſee men in good buſineſs in Lon- " don neglect their aged and diſeaſed " parents, for no other reaſon than the " pariſh is bound to find them bread— " and therefore it was *neceſſary* that " Lord HILLSBOROUGH ſhould inſert " in his plan a clauſe, obliging the pa- " rents and children of poor perſons to " maintain them."

WOULD

WOULD not any one imagine from theſe aſſertions, that the law had not provided for theſe caſes. If it had not indeed, one ſhould naturally have imputed the omiſſion to the very idea which Lord KAIMS ſuggeſts, that the feelings of nature rendered ſuch precaution unneceſſary; yet the very ſtatutes he quotes have expreſsly regulalated this matter: 39 ELIZABETH obliges (under a penalty of 20*s.* per month) that the parents and children of any poor perſon not able to work, ſhould maintain him, and the 43 of ELIZABETH extends this injunction to the grandfather, and grandmother, and children. But ſays he "the conſtant "anxiety of a labouring man to pro-"vide for his children, endears them "to him." If that idea be extended to caſes of extreme diſtreſs, which are the only objects of the law, this opinion ſeems to be at moſt doubtful. It is

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at leaſt not intuitively clear, and ſhould have been proved, before it was applied in order to prejudice a legal arrangement of ſuch importance. But in truth it affects not the wiſdom of the legiſlature of England, who expreſsly oblige a Parent to maintain his children as long as he is able, and when he is not, I believe it would be difficult to prove that he would love them the better, for being forced to the miſerable alternative of ſtarving them or himſelf.

" But the immoral effects of pub-
" lick charity ſpread ſtill wider, it fails
" not to extinguiſh the virtue of chari-
" ty among the rich, who never think
" of giving charity, when the publick
" undertakes for all—from the extinc-
" tion of charity, ſelfiſhneſs will be-
" come the ruling paſſion—in fact, the
" tax for the Poor, has contributed
" greatly to the growth of that grovel-
" ing

" ing paſſion, ſo conſpicuous at pre-
" ſent in England. Engliſh authors,
" who turn their thoughts to the Poor,
" complain of decaying charity." It is, (has indeed been ever) the querulous cry of writers of more zeal than benevolence or judgment, that *the former times were better than theſe.* This age, like others, has, in England, its characteriſtick vices, of which the principal, and probably, the ſource, is a prevailing contempt of Revealed Religion. It has its virtues too, for I will venture to aſſert, that it is an age of almſgiving, and to quote for the aſſertion the authority of Lord KAIMS in this very chapter. " Travellers
" complain, ſays he, of being infeſted
" with an endleſs number of Beggars
" in every Engliſh town." How could they be maintained, if the virtue of charity was extinct? How are the various Hoſpitals, (which he arraigns

ſo

ſo much) for common proſtitutes, the Inoculatory and Lying-in-Hoſpitals, the county Infirmaries, and the Marine Society, which he ſo much extols, all of very recent inſtitution, ſupported? By the *voluntary ſubſcriptions* of a nation, in which he is pleaſed to aſſert "*the rich never think of giving* "*charity*?" Or by what he elſewhere mentions as a kind of weakneſs; "an "overflow of charity in the good peo- "ple in England."

THAT he is not more conſiſtent with himſelf in the general idea, than in the facts relative to England, is plain from what he aſſerts in a ſubſequent paragraph, that "notwithſtand- "ing the obſtruction of municipal law, "ſeldom is there found any one ſo "obdurate as to reſiſt the impulſe of "compaſſion, when a proper object is "preſented." How is this to be reconciled

reconciled with the allegation, that publick charity "fails not to extinguiſh "the virtue of charity amongſt the "rich, who never think of giving cha- "rity, when the publick undertakes "for all?"

On the whole, though he blames the Engliſh compulſory ſyſtem, he allows "that it might be neceſſary when en- "acted to preſerve the Poor from "ſtarving, and that every meaſure for "promoting voluntary charity was firſt "tried before the fatal blow was ſtruck "---that it may be taken for grant- "ed," why he does not tell us, (and there are ſtrong facts before our eyes, which favour the contrary opinion) "that charity is in England not more "vigorous at preſent than it was in "the days of Elizabeth—of courſe "he does not wiſh to aboliſh at once "the legal proviſion," but to ſap the foundation of it by degrees, by the

following expedient to revive the ſpirit of charity, " extinguiſhed," in England, as he ſays, (how juſtly has been already ſhewn) " by the legal pro-
" viſion." This expedient would in truth not have been worth bringing to an examination, but to evince how ill qualified this Gentleman is, whatever the extent of his abilities may be in other matters, to guide the proceedings of a legiſlature in this department. He propoſes that " half
" the proviſion ſhould be raiſed by a
" tax—and half left to voluntary ſub-
" ſcription—and that the publick fund
" ſhould lye dead, till the ſubſcription
" be compleated---and that both ſhould
" be firſt examined by the juſtices of
" peace" (of whoſe equity and humanity he has before given ſo advantageous an idea) " at a quarterly meeting
" —who muſt receive ſatisfaction be-
" fore the Poor are to be relieved."

Senſible

Senſible that charity is now extinct in England, he does by no means recommend that the legiſlature ſhould at once *aboliſh* the legal proviſion, but merely *ſuſpend* it (that is a ſupply of lodging, cloaths, medicine, and food, to all the Poor) for a few months. This expedient would certainly ſuperſede the trial of every other for the preſent ſet of Poor; as it is to be preſumed none of them could faſt till the determination of the juſtices at their quarterly meeting, and by his ſuppoſition they have no reſource at preſent in the charity of the Engliſh nation. The reaſons on which he grounds his full perſwaſion that the ſubſcription will be compleated readily, are worth attending to, in order to ſhew how maturely and ſolicitouſly the writer has attended to the care of the Poor. "As the publick "fund lies dead till the ſubſcription "is compleated, it is not to be imagi-

" ned, that *any Gentleman* will ſtand
" out, it will be a publick imputation
" on his character; far from apprehend-
" ing any deficiency, confident I am
" that *every Gentleman* would conſider
" it as honourable to contribute large-
" ly." Theſe indeed are civil forms of expreſſion of little meaning, which politeneſs ſometimes leads men to uſe in common converſation. But is it on ſuch reaſonings that a legiſlature, animated by a parental ſolicitude for the moſt helpleſs claſs of its ſubjects, would ground its regulations? Theſe lines would furniſh a pleaſant preamble to an act aboliſhing one half of the proviſion for the Poor: that is in effect the whole, unleſs the pauper could ſubſiſt on one half of the food neceſſary to ſupport life. I will venture, on the ſtrength of ſome experience in charitable collections, to prophecy (what indeed a common knowledge

of

of mankind will enable any one to foretel) that in this ſubſcription the benevolent would give beyond a reaſonable proportion to their ability; the ſordid would give little or probably nothing; the vain would ſubſcribe at firſt but ſoon tire, and throw the whole burden on the benevolent; and they can eaſily quote from this chapter ſome maxims, to juſtify their conduct to the ſuperficial.

FROM theſe objections, levelled immediately at the imperfections of the particular ſyſtem adopted in England, moſt of which are applicable by inference and implication to every legal eſtabliſhment for the Poor, he proceeds directly to prove that it is "impracti-"cable to make *any* legal eſtabliſh-"ment that is not fraught with cor-"ruption." I flatter myſelf that in my argument for the Poor, I have eſtabliſhed

bliſhed their abſolute right to a national proviſion on the footing of juſtice; but as Lord KAIMS alleges that he can ſupport his aſſertion by reaſons no leſs obvious than ſolid, they are worth the trouble of examination. In a legal eſtabliſhment for the Poor "no diſtinc-"tion can be made between virtue "and vice, and conſequently every "ſuch eſtabliſhment muſt be a premi-"um for Idleneſs. The execution of "the Poor Laws would indeed be im-"practicable, were ſuch a diſtinction "attempted: where are judges to be "found, who will patiently follow out "ſuch an intricate expiſcation?" Is it poſſible to attend to this conſideration a moment, without diſcerning, that it makes directly againſt his concluſion? If the diſcrimination be ſo difficult, when regular officers are appointed for that purpoſe, muſt it not be totally impoſſible for a private man to make it, when

when he is ſolicited for occaſional alms, perhaps in the publick ſtreets? Begging, therefore, (in whatever mode it is carried on) by an infinitely greater uncertainty of the merits of the object, holds forth an infinitely greater premium for idleneſs. Nor is this inquiry by *publick officers* ſo entirely to be deſpaired of, as I have ſeen and aſſiſted in examining certificates, for near one thouſand Paupers in the City of Dublin, ſpecifying that diſtinction, in obedience to the law for badging the Poor.

"But where, ſays he, is the neceſ-
"ſity of any publick eſtabliſhment?
"Providence has ſcattered benevolence
"amongſt the ſons of men with a li-
"beral hand. In a well regulated
"government, promoting induſtry and
"virtue, the perſons who need charity
"are not many, and ſuch perſons may
"with aſſurance depend on the chari-
"ty

" ty of their neighbour. Indigent vir-" tue can never fail of relief," yet he has before told us, that in the year 1656, an æra, in which France was arrived at no inconſiderable degree of improvement, " precarious charity had " proved ſo ineffectual in Paris," that it was found neceſſary to eſtabliſh Hoſpitals " with certain funds" for the relief of the poor; and that the example of Paris was followed " by every great " town in the kingdom:" that in England, in the reign of ELIZABETH, the firſt compulſory law " was *neceſſary* " to keep the Poor from ſtarving:" that the edict of the ſtates of Holland, enacting that the Magiſtrates ſhould levy a tax, when voluntary contributions were inſufficient, " *was ſenſible*" which by his principles he muſt rather be led to think not only ſuperfluous, but *ſubverſive of induſtry and morality.*

It would require a long ſeries of arguments, to detect all the errors in theſe few lines; but not to treſpaſs too much on the reader's patience, a few lines may be ſufficient to ſhew how unworthy Lord Kaims's ideas on this ſubject are of his general literary character. For how are the diſtreſſes of the Poor to be known? he declares, that "common Begging ought abſolutely to be prohibited, at the hazard "of loſing ſome lives—that no plan "can be formed for inquiring into the "truth of their diſtreſs; for to accompliſh that taſk, a man muſt abandon "every other concern."—He ſuppoſes a "well regulated government, promoting induſtry," yet he declares equally againſt a legal eſtabliſhment in *all* countries, whether the government be well or ill regulated, whether it be calculated to encourage or extinguiſh induſtry.—"Providence, ſays he, has

"ſcattered

" ſcattered benevolence amongſt the " ſons of men with a liberal hand." This is true, but does not vice impair, and often extinguiſh this amiable virtue? Does not even accident defeat its operation? Are not ſome at a diſtance, perhaps in foreign countries? Are theſe fully attentive to that poverty which is aggravated by their abſence? Are not many careleſs, hard-hearted, ſordid, or prodigal? Let the writer make theſe allowances, and place himſelf in the ſituation of an induſtrious poor man, ſtruck by ſickneſs, ſurrounded by a helpleſs and numerous family, and forbid even to relate his diſtreſſes in publick, and I doubt whether he would with ſuch " aſſur- " ance depend on the charity of his " neighbours;" but if he could, by what rule of equity ſhould the whole burden be thrown on the conſiderate and benevolent? Why ſhould a defect

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in the laws of a country indirectly curtail the moſt valuable of its ſubjects of a reaſonable proportion of the accommodation of their fortunes, and extend as it were a publick reward to an unfeeling diſpoſition? Is not a premium for hard-heartedneſs full as exceptionable as a premium for idleneſs?

"But it may be boldly affirmed that "thoſe who need charity would be "more comfortably provided for by "the Plan of Providence than by a le-"gal eſtabliſhment." Here he takes it for granted, that a legal eſtabliſhment is not *the plan of Providence*. If it be not, I ſhall readily give it up. For I perfectly agree with the learned author, that "men make a confuſed jum-"ble, when they attempt to mend "the Laws of Nature." The Laws of Nature and the Plans of Providence, are known by their benevolence and wiſdom. By theſe ſtandards

dards let us compare the two ſyſtems, of providing for the Poor by law, or " leaving them to ſhift for them-" ſelves," under this reſtriction too, that " common Begging is abſolutely " to be prohibited, even at the riſk " of loſing lives by neglect or over-" ſight."---In one caſe, you leave the child of affliction, either ſhut up in a wretched lodging, or expoſed to the ſeverity of the weather, under the preſſure of years, hunger, cold, naked-neſs, diſeaſe, and perhaps an helpleſs family, reſtrained, by the *oppreſſion* of law from giving vent to his grief, and relating to the paſſenger the particulars of his miſery, with no other chance for relief than this, " that his " ſqualid poverty will excite a degree " of pity, proportioned to the diſtreſs." You give an unbounded licenſe to the profligate to quit every uſeful employment, and, by ſucceſsfully counterfeiting

ing that *ſqualid poverty*, to intercept the relief intended for it. You abandon the tender infant to an untimely death, or to what is infinitely worſe, to immoral habits—a fated victim to diſhoneſty, and, if a female, to proſtitution. In the other, you appoint regular guardians of the orphan and afflicted, to whom the diſtreſſed have a right to appeal: who are inſtructed to remove them from the manſions of ſorrow, to a comfortable aſylum, provided with every neceſſary, whether for health or ſickneſs, for the body or the mind, at the common expenſe of all, whom the Laws of Society have inveſted with a more ample portion of the publick wealth. Is the law of nature to be found in chance or in reaſon, in confuſion or in order? Is the plan of Providence to be traced in cruelty, idleneſs, miſery and vice, or in benevolence, induſtry, happineſs and

and virtue? The law of nature is the law of reaſon: every benevolent exertion of which is part of the great *Plan of Providence.*

HAVING ſeen what he diſapproves of, let us now advert to what he recommends. "I heartily approve every "regulation that tends to prevent "idleneſs --- common Begging ought "abſolutely to be prohibited, even at "the hazard of loſing a few lives—an "officer muſt be appointed in every "pariſh, with a competent ſalary for "apprehending and carrying to the "Work-houſe every ſtrolling Beggar," —where they are "all to be fed on "bread and water for a year, with li-"berty to work for themſelves." This mixed multitude muſt include the real Poor as well as the Impoſtor. Here is palpably a legal eſtabliſhment; an houſe, a maintenance, (tho' a ſcanty one,)

one,) officers in and out of the houſe provided at the publick expenſe. It is open to all, they need only Beg, to be admiſſible; but thoſe who cannot work muſt be *confined to their wretched appointment of bread and water*, whilſt the ſturdy Vagabond adds to it the full produce of his labour. The only difference then between Lord KAIMS's and other plans for a Work houſe, is that he allots a much better maintenance to the Impoſtor than the real Poor, or indeed than the induſtrious labourer, for he gives him the entire profits of his work, beſides the accommodation and allowance of the houſe. In this plan he contradicts too his former ideas; for with reſpect to thoſe who were reduced by their profligacy, he had before ſuggeſted a curious mode of diſcrimination, to " ſhut up thoſe " who are able to work in an houſe of " correction," to leave the helpleſs at large.

large. " If," ſays he, " by overſight or " neglect any happen to die of want, " the example will tend more to refor- " mation, than the moſt pathetick " diſcourſe from the Pulpit."

Now if we ſuppoſe one of them (for the credit of the police of the country, and for the more general edification) to periſh in the publick ſtreets, would it be perfectly clear from the appearance of the corpſe, whether he fell a victim to his own profligacy, and publick prudence, or to the mere ſavage inſenſibility of his neighbours? But let us, as he properly ſays of the embezzlement of money belonging to the Poor, " turn our eyes from a ſcene ſo horrid !"

He then ſpeaks with ſome degree of favour of the ſcheme, eſtabliſhed in Scotland, of empowering the landholders

ers to aſſeſs the pariſhioners; and recommends an improvement of it for great cities, by appointing and empowering "a committee to apply "through the Pariſh for charitable "ſubſcriptions, and if any obſtinately "refuſe to contribute, to *tax* them at "*their diſcretion.*" Here is a parochial tax, one of the moſt exceptionable of all arrangements, as has been before ſhewn, with theſe additional grievances, that no mode is eſtabliſhed of judging whether the contribution be proportioned to the ability of the ſubſcriber, nor any appeal for redreſs provided, if the Committee ſhould abuſe a *diſcretionary* power, ſo far ſurpaſſing *any* authority veſted in the *Engliſh pariſh officer*, on the Oppreſſion of which he has declaimed ſo much.

FROM his ideas of a legal eſtabliſhment, let us proceed to his obſerva-

tions on particular charitable inſtitutions for the Poor.

He condemns work-houſes as uſeleſs, yet he directs "all Beggars to be carried to one."

He commends "an Hoſpital for the "ſick, wounded and maimed, as being "productive of good without doing "any harm; ſuch an Hoſpital ſhould "depend *partly* on voluntary charity." Of courſe he allows it ſhould ariſe *partly* from a compulſory tax. Yet he praiſes the man who ſold the Poor-Houſe in the French village, which I ſuppoſe did not exclude the ſick, wounded and maimed, and "gave to "the Poor a moderate proportion of "bread and beef;" for the following extraordinary reaſon; "the Poor and "Sick were more comfortably lodged "at home, than formerly in the houſe,

"and

" and by that plan of management the " pariſh Poor decreaſed." Nothing is more likely. He turned into the ſtreets the ſick and helpleſs who *had no home*, and gave nothing but food, to thoſe who wanted lodging, raiment and medicine. I dare ſay *the Pariſh Poor decreaſed* almoſt as faſt, as the man, who ſo *prudently* ſold the Houſe, which ſheltered them from the weather, could have wiſhed.

I AM ſorry to point out further inaccuracies in the few facts, on which he builds his benevolent ſyſtem of ſtripping the Engliſh Poor of the comfort purchaſed with three millions of money. " In Briſtol," ſays he, " the pa- " riſh Poor twenty years ago did not " exceed four thouſand, at preſent " they amount to more than ten thou- " ſand." With that city I am well acquainted. It has not 9000 houſes,

its burials amount not to 1700 in a year; and of courſe the whole number of inhabitants cannot be calculated at more than 50,000. If this writer's aſſertion were true, more than one fifth of the inhabitants muſt receive the pariſh pay; and the comfort he draws from this *extraordinary* fact is, that the whole number (*ſick*, *wounded*, and *maimed* amongſt the reſt) will ſoon "be left to their ſhifts." I ſuſpect that he has miſtaken the proportion of expenſe, for the proportion of the numbers of perſons ſupported, as the ſum levied in that city for the Poor, has really increaſed (nearly in the period he mentions) from 4000 to 10,000*l.* and upwards. But from whatever cauſe the miſtake may have ariſen, it is a ſufficient ſpecimen to caution the Reader not to rely implicitly on the facts advanced by this Gentleman.

To

To houſes for receiving and training to labour orphans and begging children, he objects, " becauſe Children " require the affection of a mother." Granted. But ſuppoſe they have no mother; Suppoſe the mother has abandoned them, or leads them about to beg; Theſe caſes he thinks not worth providing for. Suppoſe ſhe has half a dozen young children, and is a widow: " In that and ſuch caſes," ſays he, " would it not be better to diſtri- " bute ſmall ſums from time to time " amongſt poor families overburdened " with children? and with reſpect to " orphans and begging children, it " would be a more ſalutary meaſure " to encourage mechanicks, manufac- " turers, and farmers above all, to " educate ſuch children, with a pre- " mium for each, the half in hand, " and the other half when they can " work for themſelves." Theſe ideas may

may be very proper, but where is the fund, when every legal eſtabliſhment is aboliſhed?

His objections to a Foundling Hoſpital, may be perhaps of ſome weight in England, where there is another proviſion for poor deſerted children, but are by no means ſolid, in the general manner he applies them to countries, which have no other reſource.

He arraigns every eſtabliſhment in *London* for proſtitutes, whether to cure their diſeaſes, preſerve their and their *innocent children*'s lives, or even to reform their morals, yet he thinks Mr. Stirling deſerves to be kept in perpetual remembrance, for the ſcheme he contrived to reform common proſtitutes in *Edinburgh*. It would take too much time to do juſtice to the wiſdom and goodneſs of theſe inſtitutions.

I have

I have on another occaſion delivered my ſentiments at large on an Aſylum for penitent proſtitutes *.

CHARITY ſchools he finds fault with as foſtering lazineſs. If they have no attention to induſtry, they are on a bad plan; the Charter Schools in *Ireland* train the children to labour. "Reading and writing fluently, ſays "he, renders them too delicate for hard "labour, and too proud for ordinary "labour," yet he praiſes the orphans ſchool at *Edinburgh*, where he ſays "they are taught to read and write." As to the ſuppoſed advantage of being inſtructed in the principles of religion and morality in a Charity School, he holds that unneceſſary; "the princi-

"ples

* In a Sermon preached before the Governeſſes and Guardians of the Magdalen Aſylum, in Dublin, on the 1ſt of May 1774, and publiſhed at their requeſt.

" ples of Theology and Morality are " ſtamped on the heart of man—the " natural impreſſions are ſufficient for " good conduct." To omit the palpable inference, that Revelation is not the foundation of his Theology, (as indeed no part of this chapter breathes the ſpirit of Chriſtianity,) from whence does he draw his examples of the ſufficiency of theſe natural impreſſions, unimproved by education? Do the Theology and Morality of the African or American Savage juſtify this aſſertion? ---It is true, as he obſerves, that " God " hath placed labour as a guard to vir- " tue;" but does that imply that " God " hath not contrived another guard in " religious inſtruction?" But ſuch is the efficacy which he aſcribes to labour, that " more integrity will be " found among a number of induſtri- " ous Poor taken at random, than " among the ſame number in any " claſs."

" claſs." Of this I pretend not to judge from my own knowledge, as I am not poſſeſſed of facts ſufficient to balance the moral virtues of different claſſes of men; but I cannot help recollecting that a few pages before Lord KAIMS ſpeaks of a man in *this* claſs of life as " a groveling creature, who " has no ſenſe of honour, and ſcarce " any of ſhame."

I SHOULD apologize for having entered into an examination of the principles of this writer, with a minuteneſs of attention, to which a judicious reader will not think them entitled. But the generality of mankind may be eaſily influenced by the authority of a name, leſs conſiderable than Lord KAIMS's, to embrace doctrines, which coincide with their apparent Intereſt; and popular opinion is of particular importance at a time when this great

ſubject

ſubject is agitated in the Parliament of *Great Britain*, and may ſoon engage the attention of the legiſlature of this kingdom. The queſtion is of no ordinary magnitude: Whether education ſhould be provided for the infant, medicine for the ſick, and a retreat for the aged, from a regular fund; or whether they ſhall be abandoned to idleneſs, vice, diſeaſe, and famine? It involves the comfort, the exiſtence, and the virtue of multitudes. It affects national wealth, happineſs, and manners: it is deeply intereſting to the commonwealth. On ſuch a ſubject no man has a right to offer any thoughts, which are not the reſult of full inquiry and moſt mature reflection; but on the ſide of humanity it would be more pardonable to be precipitate, becauſe it would be more amiable, and leſs dangerous to err. Lord KAIMS has engaged on the other ſide with a zeal approaching

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to acrimony;—He has rendered it the duty of every man who can detect his miſtakes, to point them out to publick obſervation. I therefore without reſerve conclude; and flatter myſelf that the foregoing Remarks will juſtify the declaration, that his facts are miſrepreſented, or incompetent; that his reaſonings are inconcluſive and inconſiſtent; that his ideas of Morality and Theology are equally imperfect; and that his doctrines are no leſs ſubverſive of publick order and induſtry, than repugnant to humanity and juſtice.

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